DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING originates in the belly, drawing the diaphragm downward into the abdominal cavity. Stress release occurs during slow full breaths from your abdomen instead of short shallow breaths from your chest.

INHALE: Feel your belly expand. Take another deep sip of air and fill up your lungs completely.

EXHALE: Open your mouth, allow your tongue to rest and exhale with a HAAAAaaahhhhh sound. The belly rises / chest rises on the inhale, then the chest releases / belly releases on the exhale.

Get Outdoors & Breathe Briskly walking, or taking lunch outdoors, increases endorphins. 1 Commit to 15 minutes outside when possible. To perform diaphragmatic breathing, concentrate on taking a deep breath. Imagine healthy lungs filtering toxins, then exhale releasing what is not beneficial. 2 Diaphragmatic breathing exercise reduces anxiety and stress. 3 First, practice lying down or, seated with both feet on the floor. Place one hand on your stomach and one on your upper chest for a few breaths in an exaggerated way to help you get a feel for it. If you practice this for just 5 minutes each day, you can significantly reduce your overall level of anxiety and stress. Practicing even a few times daily for 2-3 weeks helps "reset" healthy breathing. The more frequently you can incorporate this into your day, the faster the quality and pace of your breath will yield increased feelings of peacefulness.

STOP TECHNIQUE: STOP. TAKE A BREATH. OBSERVE. PROCEED.
The "STOP TECHNIQUE” is useful in stopping negative reactions when you feel stress building during:
- highly emotional communication
- overwhelming situations
- negative self-talk

Visualize a “stop” sign in your mind. Take a deep breath and focus your attention toward the area surrounding your heart. Imagine your breath moving in and out from this space; your heartspace. Bring to mind a loving moment: imagine and feel the pleasure of holding an infant; cuddling with a favorite person or animal, being in love… From your heart-space, ask yourself, “What would be a useful or wise response to this situation?”

Repeat an affirmation that is meaningful to you and applies to the situation:
I feel calm & peaceful inside • I listen & respond with kindness & compassion • I am quiet & centered inside • I choose what is best right now •

References